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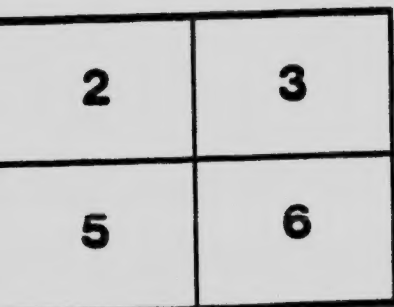
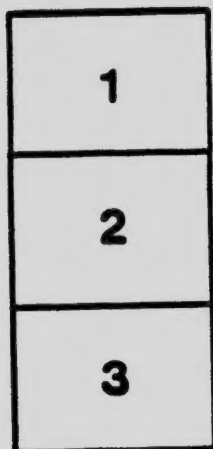
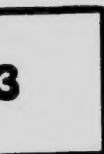
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No. V.

THE BRITISH NAVY IN HISTORY

BY

J. CASTELL HOPKINS, F.S.S., F.R.G.S.

Author of "The Canadian Annual Review"

To the boy or girl or youth of Canada the record of the British Navy should be one of the most attractive of all possible studies. The career of the British sailor, the course of a British ship, whether in war or peace, whether patrolling the seas in armed might or in peaceful mission sailing from port to port, touches all nations and races and conditions. The British Sailor meets with countless natural problems of earth and air, experiences every kind of climate, every condition of burning tropical heat or bitter arctic cold, views every sort of scene in beauty or ugliness, in storm or calm, comes into contact, from Said to Vladivostock, from Constantinople to the Horn, from New York to Calcutta, from Quebec to Melbourne, from Halifax to Liverpool, with all forms of humanity; he can prove all the problems of our vast Empire with its ownership of a quarter of the earth's surface, or 15,000,000 square miles, and its control (at present) of a third of the world's population, or 450 millions of people.

Such problems are too great for a child to consider seriously, too big for a youth to master; but even the fringe of them, the outlines of world conditions, the nature of the men and women of our day, the countless races and creeds, the vivid incidents and stirring events, which are met by the sailor or seaman as he traverses the world of waters, should prove a source of intense interest. The Canadian boy, in fact, who reads Marryatt, or Kingston, or Henty, or our own Macdonald Oxley, will find stories teeming with life, with all the attraction of sea-power, with all the brilliance of British annals.

The Navy is called the "Silent Service" because the destination and location of its great war-ships, cruisers, torpedo boats, destroyers, submarines, etc., are unknown to the public; because its officers never talk in public of naval tactics, policy or disposition of fleets; because the press does not discuss the distribution, number and quality of guns or armament or the action and availability of war-ships in general; because secrecy is essential to all details of the Service in time of war, and useful, as to many of them, in days of peace; because it has not been for many years a politically debatable subject—all Britain agreeing as to the vital need of a powerful, dominant

fleet; because in days of Spanish rivalry upon every sea and shore, or of Napoleonic dreams of French world-power, or of the later and openly-avowed German design to have the greatest Navy in the world—one which would eventually dominate and over-power that of Britain—the less said of construction, character and disposition of ships the better.

Hence it is that great divisions of the British Empire, such as Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, have never quite realized the tremendous work of the Royal Navy in peace or war. Something our people have learned of Naval traditions and history, but not enough to inspire them with the same enthusiastic perception of the value of sea-power and Naval efficiency as is held by the people of the British Isles.

To the British people in their Island home naval strength has always been vital. The Navy has safe-guarded an ever-growing commerce upon the most distant seas and with every continent and every nation. It has had for a century to protect the transport of British settlers to new countries and far-away regions where, in time, the British flag was to fly and prosperous settlements, colonies, nations, were to develop. It has carried soldiers to guard British dependancies and emigrants in countries such as India, British America, the 13 Colonies which became the United States, South and East and West Africa, Egypt and the Soudan, Australia and New Zealand, the Malay Peninsula or Burmah, Persia or Mesopotamia, South America or the West Indies. It has done much to enforce treaties made with an infinite variety of nations, races, tribes and peoples all over the world.

Everywhere, in every port and harbour, along every coast and national water, in every ocean and sea and on most of the great inland waters, on every great river and national waterway, it has ploughed a silent path of power, made the British flag respected, kept the peace at times, and preserved local liberties at other seasons. Everywhere it has been the force behind British diplomacy, the power most feared by the ambitious autocrats or robbers of the world—whether it was Philip II. of Spain or Louis XIV. of France or the great Napoleon or Wilhelm II.; whether it was the gold ships of the Spanish Main, the pirates of Barbary, or the bigoted followers of Paul Kruger. Howard and Grenville, Raleigh and Drake, Anson and Hawke, Benbow and Nelson, Collingwood and St. Vincent, Rodney and Blake, down to these later days of Jellicoe and Beatty, Tyrwhitt and Keyes, Cradock and Sturdee, have, with many another great leader of the seas, passed down the silent ways of the Navy to some immortal achievement and to the halls of British fame. As Newbolt so well puts it:

Admirals all, they said their say (the echoes are ringing still),
Admirals all, they went their way to the haven under the hill.

But they left us a Kingdom none can take, the realm of the circling sea,
Be ruled by the rightful sons of Blake, and the Rodneys yet to be.

Admirals all, for England's sake, honour be yours and fame.
And honour, as long as waves shall break, to Nelson's peerless name.

In the many years and centuries represented by these names the Navy made the British Isles secure and made possible their expansion into a world-wide Empire; in the battles and wars covered by the fame of these Admirals Britain was frequently fighting several Powers at once; in each case of Naval development by a great European nation the Island Kingdom had, sooner or later, to face the issue and win supremacy at sea or fall to the lowly and feeble place in the world which her small island territory would otherwise occupy. Spain in its great days of world empire, France under Louis XIV and Napoleon, Holland in its time of Naval power and Colonial expansion when Von Tromp sought to "sweep the seas with a broom," Germany in these later days, had all, in turn, to be met and beaten. The following table shows the splendid record of British Naval battles—all victories with two specified exceptions:

Place	Date	Victory of
Sluys	June 24, 1340	British over French.
Harfleur	Aug. 15, 1416	French over British and Dutch.
Spanish Armada	July 21-28, 1588	British over Spaniards.
Dover Straits	Nov. 29, 1652	British over Dutch.
Santa Cruz	Apr. 20, 1657	British over Spaniards.
Mouth of the Thames	July 25-6, 1666	British over Dutch.
Beachy Head	June 30, 1690	Dutch over British and French.
Cape Le Hogue	May 19, 1692	English and Dutch over French.
Carthage	Aug. 19, 1702	British over French.
Vigo	Oct. 12, 1702	British over French.
Capture of Gibraltar	July 24, 1704	British over Spaniards and French.
Cape Finisterre	May 3, 1747	British over French.
Quiberon Bay	Nov. 20, 1759	British over French.
Defence of Gibraltar	Sept. 13, 1782	British over Spaniards and French.
Rodney's Victory	Apr. 12, 1782	British over French.
Howe's Victory	June 1, 1794	British over French.
Off Ushant	June 1, 1794	British over French.
Camperdown	Oct. 11, 1797	British over Dutch.
Cape St. Vincent	Feb. 14, 1797	British over Spaniards.
The Nile	Aug. 1, 1798	British over French.
Off Cadiz	July 12, 1801	British over French and Spanish.
Trafalgar	Oct. 21, 1805	British over French.
Copenhagen	Sept. 2-5, 1807	British over Danes.
Algiers	Aug. 27, 1816	British over Barbary Pirates.

Navarino	Oct. 20, 1827	British over Turks.
Acre	Nov. 3, 1840	British over Egyptians.
Alexandria	July 11-13, 1882 ..	British over Egyptians.
Falkland Isles	Nov. 1, 1914	British over Germans.
Dogger Bank	Jan. 25, 1915	British over Germans.
Jutland	June 1, 1916	British over Germans.

There were many smaller actions in these wars and in the conflict with the United States and some of them were defeats but, as a rule, British ships and officers and sailors won the day. In the French war ending 1802, during which Great Britain was also fighting the Dutch and Spaniards, a total of 541 enemy ships were captured; in the War ending 1814, during which Britain was fighting France, Spain, Denmark, Russia and the United States, all at the same time, 569 ships were captured; in the 1914-18 War with Germany enemy shipping was wiped off the seas entirely and, on Nov. 21, 1918, without a fight, and in ignominious acceptance of defeat, the bulk of the great German Navy surrendered to Sir David Beatty and the British North Seas Fleet.

As to this latter war the facts of sea-power may be briefly summarized. Without the British Navy France could not have been helped by the millions of men who poured across the Channel and the Atlantic and, indeed, from all parts of the world, to its central battle-fields; without the British Navy our own Empire could never have conducted simultaneous campaigns in Egypt, East Africa, the Cameroons, South West Africa, the Balkans, Palestine and Mesopotamia; without the British Navy Germany's colonies could not have been conquered and held with Germany quite impotent to rescue them; without the British Navy the Belgian Army could never have been re-armed, reconstituted and re-equipped, or the Serbian forces similarly saved and re-made; without it Russia would not have been munitioned for three long years or Italy enabled to overcome her natural deficiencies of supply and industry, or France remain a great manufacturing nation; without it Greece could not have been held to the Allied cause and Bulgaria and Turkey eventually forced to yield; without it the distant power of America could not have been rendered effective or the Allies enabled to import freely from the neutral world all that they needed or could obtain.

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